
The MCA Advisory

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Board Members

John W. Adams, President
John Sallay, Vice President, jsallay@comcast.net
Barry D. Tayman, Treasurer
David T. Alexander, davida@stacks.com
Robert F. Fritsch, bobfritsch@earthlink.net
David Menchell, dmenchell@aol.com
Scott Miller, wheatabix@comcast.net
Ira Rezak, ira.rezak@med.va.gov
Donald Scarinci, dscarinci1@aol.com
Michael Turrini, emperor@juno.com
Benjamin Weiss, Webmaster

John W. Adams, Editor

99 High Street, 11th floor
Boston, MA 02110
john.adams@canaccordadams.com

Barry Tayman, Treasurer

3115 Nestling Pine Court
Ellicott City, MD 21042
bdtayman@verizon.net

Benjamin Weiss, Webmaster

benweiss.org@comcast.net

Website: medalcollectors.org

Editor of Collectors' Guide, Dick Johnson
(dick.johnson@snet.net)

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Annual Meeting August 7, 2009 Los Angeles

What's New on Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

From the Editor

The Sallay-Schlepphorst-Weiss project to archive oral history gets better and better. To be posted soon will be an interview with Eric P. Newman that took place on February 10th. This interview covers events and people from 1917 to the present day—that's right, 92 years!

Those who listen to the tape will be enchanted with the development of Eric Newman, the collector. How does anyone on a limited budget assemble a collection that, in terms of scope and quality, justifies a museum to contain it? Also covered is the development of Mr. Newman as a scholar, with specific suggestions for those who would do research in the field of medals. As if all this were not fare enough, there are eloquent descriptions of such prominent numismatists as Burdette Johnson and Colonel Edward Green. Along the way, our interviewee details his efforts in education beginning with his Research Foundation and evolving into Museum #1 before climaxing with Museum #2. There is much content in this latter to attract medal collectors, with any number of salivating specifics provided. At the end of the day, those who dial up this newly-recorded slice of numismatic history will be rewarded with 45 minutes of pure enjoyment and learning.

MCA Slate

Medal Collectors of America will have its biennial elections at our annual meeting in August. The following have been proposed for officers and directors:

President – John Sallay
Vice President – David Menchell
Secretary/Treasurer – Barry Tayman
Webmaster and Director – Ben Weiss

Returning Directors:
John Adams

David Alexander
Bob Fritsch
Scott Miller
Ira Rezak
Donald Scarinci

New Directors:

Anne Bentley – Author and Curator of Art at the Massachusetts Historical Society

Margaret Hofer – Author and Curator of Decorative Arts at the New York Historical Society

Tony Lopez – Author, collector and researcher par excellence

This is a talented group of individuals who, in the opinion of your retiring president, will keep the organization vital and take it to new heights. Included later in this issue are biographies of our three new directors. Please give them your active support. Also, extend your thanks to retiring director John Kraljevich, who has served you well.

Visit to the New York Historical Society (by John W. Adams)

Whatever category of Americana one might choose, the New York Historical Society is loaded. It is difficult to walk through the front door without tarrying for the rest of the day. Visiting on a Monday when the Museum is closed, we were spared this temptation. Instead we called on Margi Hofer, the redoubtable Curator of American Decorative Arts. Our single minded purpose was to view a John Stewart medal, which had recently surfaced from amongst the Society's vast holdings.

In COMITIA AMERICANA (by John W. Adams and Anne E. Bentley), the rarity of the Stewart medal is duly documented. Aside from two obverse clichés and assorted copies, the census contains only two examples in silver and one in bronze, the latter belonging to Richard Margolis. This piece lacks the rust pits that are found on the two medals struck in

silver, a difference that would confirm the owners belief that his is a “press proofing” used to test the pressure required to bring up the design. As such, it would naturally be struck before the “production run.”

The bronze medal belonging to the NYHS is quite like the two silver medals. It is sharply struck; it has rust pits opposite Stewart’s fingers and in the reverse exergue; and it also shows a small injury in the die at K-7 on the rim of the obverse. It is, in short a truly exciting discovery: the first business strike of the Stewart medal known in bronze.

Major Stewart’s accomplishments are as obscure as his medal is rare. Suffice to say that he fought often and bravely for his country at a time when such service was most sorely needed. It is fitting that a memorial of him lies close to the Horatio Gates medal in gold, also in the Cabinet of the NYHS as well as many other talismans of our early patriots.

Georgia Stamm Chamberlain 1910-1961

Medal Collectors of America (MCA) presents an annual award for research in medallic arts. This is named for Georgia Stamm Chamberlain, a researcher and writer in the field of American medals and medalists. As very little has been written about her, MCA members may not be familiar with her or her work.

Georgia Stamm was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 16, 1910, the daughter of Charles G. Stamm and Anna Engel. Her father was a hotel executive in New York City.

Georgia attended St. Agatha’s School in New York City from 1923 to 1927. She attended Smith College from 1928 to 1930 and Columbia University from 1930 to 1932 where she received a Bachelor of Literature degree. While in college she also studied sculpting at the Art Students League in New York City.

As an artist she specialized in portrait sculpture. Her works were exhibited at the Art Student’s League in 1935, at Westport, Connecticut in 1936, and at the National Sculpture Society in 1941.

On October 25, 1941, she married Robert Stoner Chamberlain (1903-1982). He was the son of Herman S. Chamberlain, a high school teacher, and Elva Stoner. Georgia and Robert had a son, Robert S. Chamberlain, Jr., on October 2, 1945.

Also a writer, her husband Robert Chamberlain graduated from Stanford University and received a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1936. He worked for the Carnegie Institute of Washington in their division of historical research.

Robert wrote several books including *Francisco Morazan* (1950), *The Conquest and Colonization of Yucatan 1517-1550* (1948/1966) and *The Conquest and Colonization of Honduras, 1502-1550* (1953/1966).

The couple lived in Alexandria, Virginia. This location near Washington, D.C. gave Georgia the opportunity to conduct research at the National Archives and the Library of Congress. The articles she wrote for *The Numismatist* relied on standard sources available to most researchers. Some original material from the National Archives was also included and cited in these articles.

Her primary topic for research and articles were early American medalists and die-sinkers including John Gadsby Chapman, Salathiel Ellis, Moritz Furst, Robert Ball Hughes, Ferdinand Pettrich, John Reich, Joseph Willson and Joseph Wright. Her articles remain valuable references for later writers.

Georgia was a member of the American Numismatic Society, the Columbia Historical Society and the American Association of University Women. She was a member and officer of the National League of American Pen Women. They gave her an award for her article on John Gadsby Chapman in *Antiques*

Magazine. She received three Heath Literary Awards from the American Numismatic Association including a fifth award in 1955, an honorable mention for three articles in 1959 (one of ten) and an honorary certificate in 1960 (one of five).

Georgia was working to expand her articles into books when she died in an Alexandria, Virginia, hospital on December 12, 1961, at just the age of 51. Her books were published posthumously.

Books

Studies on John Gadsby Chapman, American Artist, 1880-1889. The Turnpike Press. Alexandria, VA: 1962.

American Medals and Medalists. The Turnpike Press. Annandale, VA: 1963.

Studies on American Painters and Sculptors of the Nineteenth Century. Annandale, VA: 1965.

Articles

Moritz Furst, Die-sinker and Artist. *The Numismatist* [June 1954] Vol. 67, No. 6, pp. 588-592.

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Medals Made in America by Moritz Furst. *The Numismatist* [Oct 1954] Vol. 67, No. 10, pp. 1075-1080.

Joseph Wright, First Draughtsman and Die-sinker to the United States Mint. *The Numismatist*, [Dec 1954] Vol. 67, No. 12, pp. 1282-1287.

Pettrich, The Sculptor of Washington, Clay and Poinsett. *The Antiques Journal* February, 1955.

John Reich, Assistant Engraver to the United States Mint. *The Numismatist*. [Mar 1955] Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 242-249. [Heath Literary Award – Fifth]

More John Reich Medals. *The Numismatist* [June 1955] Vol. 68, No. 6, pp. 623.

Joseph Willson, American Medalist. *The Numismatist* [Nov 1955] Vol. 68, No. 11, pp. 1185-1187.

Ferdinand Pettrich, Sculptor of the President Tyler Indian Peace Medal. *The Numismatist* [Apr 1957] Vol. 70, No. 4, pp. 387-390.

Chapman's Model of the President Polk Indian Peace Medal. *The Numismatist* [May 1957] Vol. 70, No. 5, pp. 533-537.

The Portrait Busts of Robert Ball Hughes. *Art Quarterly* [Winter 1957] Vol. 20, No. 4, p. 382.

The Hopper Medal by Salathiel Ellis. *The Numismatist* [June 1958] Vol. 71, No. 6, pp. 655-656.

John Gadsby Chapman: A Reappraisal. *Antiques* [June 1958] Vol. 73, pp. 566-569.

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General Taylor's Gold Medal for Rio Grande Victories. *The Numismatist* [Mar 1959] Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 259-263.

General Taylor's Gold Medal for Monterey. *The Numismatist* [Apr 1959] Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 387-388.

President Zachary Taylor's Indian Peace Medal. *The Numismatist* [May 1959] Vol. 72, No. 5, pp. 519-524.

The Baptism of Pocahontas; John Gadsby Chapman's Gigantic Mural in the Rotunda of the National Capital. *The Iron Worker* Summer 1959.

Horatio Greenough's Proposed Designs for the United States Coinage. *Art Quarterly*, Vol. 22 Autumn 1959, No. 3, pp. 257-271.

Wright and the Scott and Taylor Medals. *The Numismatist* [Jun 1960] Vol. 73, No. 6, pp. 691-700. [Heath Literary Award – Honorary Certificate]

Compromise of 1850 Medal. *The Numismatist* [Jan 1961] Vol. 74, No. 1, pp. 27-28.

John Gadsby Chapman, Painter of Virginia. *The Art Quarterly* Winter 1961.

Obituaries

The Numismatist. [May 1962] Vol. 75. No. 5.
p. 613.

The Washington Post. December 14, 1961, p.
D13. [death notice only]

Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Memorial Award

Awarded to promising newcomers in the field
of researching medals

2004 Vicken Yegparian
2005 John Kraljevich
2006 Max Spiegel
2007 Leonard Augsburg

The following article by Margaret Hofer is a superior piece of research. Margi combines in-depth knowledge of American Decorative Arts with the instincts of a detective. Close study of her writing and her bibliography will provide all readers with inspiration as well as enjoyment. As if our cup is not already running over, Margi will join the MCA Board come our August elections.—Ed.

The Schuyler Medal (by Margaret Hofer)

Indian medal, probably Nuremberg, Germany,
ca. 1736, with alterations ca. 1750

Unidentified maker; possibly altered by Anton
Schmidt (1725-1793) at Shamokin, PA

DESCRIPTION: Oval cast medal with suspension
loop (added later) and wrought chain; obverse
central section cast with bust-length portraits of
facing monarchs with five-pointed coronet
above; along outer section, later engraved
legend over erasure, with cast crossed laurel
branches at bottom; denticle edge. Reverse

with traces of erased border and later
inscription.

INSCRIPTIONS: Obverse legend, engraved:
"GEORGE & CAROLINE . Kg : & Q : OF
ENGLd : . Reverse inscription, engraved:
"GANOUSSEACHERI /
T'GANIATARECHOC /
TSCHIGOCHGOHARONC /
RACHWISTONIS / HAJINKONIS" with date
below: "1750."

2 3/16 x 1 15/16 in. (5.5 x 4.9 cm)

PROVENANCE: Philip Schuyler (1733-1804); his
son John Bradstreet Schuyler (1765-1795); his
son Philip Schuyler (1788-1865); his daughter,
Ruth Schuyler Ogden (1813-1901); her son
Walter Ogden (b. 1848); his cousin Richard
Ogden (b. 1851, son of Elizabeth Van
Rensselaer Schuyler and Richard Harison
Ogden); his sister Fanny Ogden (b. 1848).

PUBLISHED REFERENCES: James Grant Wilson,
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Gift of Miss Fanny Ogden, 1923.36

Upon cursory inspection, this silver
medal might be mistaken for a British Indian
peace medal of the type commonly distributed
among Native American chiefs to facilitate
diplomacy and secure allegiance to the crown.

Deeper analysis, however, reveals a considerably more complex story. This medal has bridged great cultural divides, crossed back and forth between the Anglo-Saxon and Native American worlds, and undergone radical alteration during its well traveled existence. Scholars of Native American culture have long puzzled over this intriguing medal, misled by the Schuyler family's assertion, upon its donation in 1923, that the medal was "given to General [Philip] Schuyler by one of the last of the Mohawk Indian Chiefs" and presented to them "by the Provincial Government of New York in 1750 as a reward for bravery in the French and English wars begun in 1745."ⁱ In the mid-nineteenth century, the Schuylers enlisted the expertise of Eleazer Williams (ca. 1787-1858), an Episcopal missionary of Mohawk ancestry, to decipher the five-line inscription on the reverse of the medal. Williams identified the inscription as "nothing more than the names of the Indian chiefs who distinguished themselves in the wars commenced in 1745," including a Cayuga, an Oneida, an Onondaga, and two Mohawks.ⁱⁱ The myth was reinforced in 1893, when noted Seneca Ely S. Parker declared that the inscription referred to five Mohawk warriors who distinguished themselves in the King's service.ⁱⁱⁱ

Soon after the medal's donation to the New-York Historical Society, numismatist Sydney P. Noe wrestled with an interpretation of the medal and addressed its physical alterations, pointing out that it was fashioned from an earlier marriage medal.^{iv} Unaware of the earlier Williams and Parker translations, Noe enlisted his own team of experts, Arthur C. Parker of the New York State Museum and George G. Heye of the Museum of the American Indian. Both interpreted the inscription, optimistically, as a descriptive phrase identifying the medal's maker and his location.^v Noe's interpretation, and those of Williams and Parker before him, all fell short of actually connecting the medal with Native

Americans living around 1750. Through the 1990s, scholars continued to publish the medal with the highly questionable history first offered by the Schuyler family.^{vi}

A research breakthrough in 2008 revealed an entirely unexpected discovery and launched a new angle of inquiry: the five names engraved on the medal reverse correspond with the Iroquois names of Moravian missionaries active among the Indians of Pennsylvania and New York in 1750. *Ganousseracheri*, or "on the pumpkin," was the Onondaga name given to the prominent missionary David Zeisberger (1721-1808) by the Iroquois leader Shikellamy (d. 1748) in an impromptu ceremony en route to Onondaga in 1745.^{vii} In the same mystical rite, John Joseph Bull (1721-1788) was christened with the Oneida name *Hajinkonis*, or "twister of tobacco."^{viii} *T'Ganiatareco*, "between two seas," was the name for Mohawk scholar and musician Johann (John) Christopher Pyrlaeus (1713-1785)^{ix}; *Tschigochgoaronc* was the name bestowed upon Rev. Christian Henry Rauch (1718-1763)^x; and *Rachwistonis* refers to Anton (Anthony) Schmidt (1725-1793), who was christened when appointed blacksmith for the Shamokin mission (now Sunbury, Pennsylvania) in 1747.^{xi}

These five men were among the earliest Moravian missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Indians. Headquartered in Herrnhut, Germany, the Moravians began their American missionary efforts in Georgia in 1735 and expanded their work to New York and Pennsylvania by 1740. In 1741, they founded a successful communal settlement and base for missionary activity on the Lehigh River at Bethlehem. The Moravians generally established missions in isolated areas beyond white settlements, and thus were often the first white settlers in those areas. Thankfully, the Moravian missionaries kept voluminous records of their efforts, providing crucial eyewitness accounts of the Indians—and the documentation that enabled identification of the

medal inscription. Although specific mention of the medal has not yet been located in mission records, the accounts provide sufficient evidence to link the five Brethren to the mission at Shamokin, established by the Moravians in 1747.

Located at the junction of the north and west branches of the Susquehanna River, Shamokin was considered a strategic but dangerous location. The village attracted a polyglot community of Indians, including Iroquois warriors passing through on their way to fight the southern Catawbas, as well as Delaware, Tuteloe, Nanticoke, and Susquahannock.^{xii} The rampant drunkenness, orgies, and general unruliness at Shamokin made such an impression on the Moravians that two missionaries dubbed the village “The Stronghold of the Prince of Darkness.”^{xiii} The Oneida chief and Iroquois leader Shikellamy, head of the village, petitioned the governor of Pennsylvania to send a blacksmith to Shamokin, and the Moravians volunteered to provide the smith, along with a fully outfitted forge, if they could also build and staff a mission there.

Anton Schmidt (*Rachwistonis*), escorted by Christian Rauch (*Tschigochgoaronc*), left Bethlehem in August 1747 to take up his blacksmith post at Shamokin.^{xiv} Schmidt busied himself repairing the hatchets, knives, guns, and other items brought by Indians from miles around. David Zeisberger (*Ganousserarcheri*) assumed the position of head missionary at Shamokin in February 1749 and was also called to participate in expeditions when his services as interpreter were needed. He and Rauch kept a diary of their activities at Shamokin between February 1749 and March 1750.^{xv} Pyrlaeus (*T’Ganiatareco*), also a skilled interpreter, taught Mohawk to Zeisberger and Bull at the language school in Bethlehem and served as an interpreter for Indian councils. John Joseph Bull (*Hajinkonis*), the son of a Pennsylvanian Quaker, joined the Moravian Church in 1742.

He accompanied Zeisberger on many missionary excursions and worked with him, Rauch, and Pyrlaeus at Shamokin.^{xvi} The missionary activities of all five individuals referenced on the medal intersected in 1750 in the common location of Shamokin. While Zeisberger, Pyrlaeus, Rauch, and Bull all spent time traveling during that year, Schmidt apparently remained at his blacksmith post at Shamokin. Further evidence of the Shamokin connection is Bull’s designation *Hajinkonis*, the Oneida name given him by the Shamokin leader—as opposed to his more commonly used Indian name, *Shebosh* (running water).

While evidence points to a specific geographic location for the medal’s 1750 transfer, the circumstances of the presentation remain unclear. A single name inscribed on a medal is typically interpreted as that of the recipient, but this list of five names is most unusual and begs for an alternate interpretation. It is quite possible that the five individuals referred to on the medal reverse were not the recipients, as has long been assumed, but were actually the presenters of the medal. The missionaries may have offered this medal to an Iroquois with whom they were negotiating, much as they would present a wampum belt or string. The Moravians clearly followed established decorum when engaging in Iroquois diplomacy. For instance, when Zeisberger and his fellow missionary John Frederick Cammerhoff traveled to Onondaga in July 1750 to make requests of the Indian council, they met privately with chief Canassatego and conveyed their petition to him in order for the chief to represent them at the Indian council. In their exchange with the chief, each of the four requests made by the missionaries was confirmed with a fathom of wampum.^{xvii} Alternately, the medal may have served as a passport for the recipient, identifying his close association with the Moravians and ensuring his safe travel through Moravian-friendly territory. Passport badges of silver or copper were mandated by the Virginia General

Assembly in 1661/62 for Indians traveling within the bounds of white settlements; several late seventeenth-century examples engraved with the names of Indian chiefs survive.^{xviii} While traveling on the western frontier of Pennsylvania, Indian agent and fur trader George Croghan (ca. 1720-1782) encountered an Indian wearing a medal that allowed him to quickly determine whether he was friend or enemy.^{xix}

To whom might the five missionaries have presented the medal in 1750? Given the selection of names, including two personally bestowed by Shikellamy, and the strong link with Shamokin, the logical deduction would be Shikellamy. However, the Oneida chief died in December 1748, shortly after returning from a journey to Bethlehem to be baptized a Christian. Another possibility is Andrew Montour (ca. 1700-1772), a gifted interpreter and son of an Oneida war chief who served as a guide with Shikellamy on the 1745 journey during which Zeisberger and Bull were christened and adopted into the Iroquois confederacy. Interestingly, Montour's son, John Montour, rose to prominence and later commanded a company of Delaware Indians on the side of the Americans during the Revolutionary War, where he may have had contact with General Philip Schuyler, commander of the Northern Department during the war.

The circumstances of the medal's presentation to Philip Schuyler at this point remain conjectural, as no documentation has been found to support the family's assertion that it was presented by a Mohawk chief. Given Schuyler's close association with the Mohawks before, during, and after the Revolution, the claim is certainly plausible. Schuyler served as Indian commissioner for many years, negotiated several treaties with the Iroquois confederacy, and was adopted and named by the Mohawks.^{xx} He reportedly had a Mohawk mistress, Mary Hill, who kept him current on the affairs of the Iroquois

confederacy.^{xxi} It is possible that the medal, which reflects allegiance to the British crown, was traded in to Philip Schuyler after the Revolution in exchange for a peace medal issued by the United States government, a symbol of the bearer's loyalty to the newly formed nation. Such American peace medals, naming President George Washington, were being made as early as 1789 for presentation to Indians.

Physical evidence confirms that the Schuyler medal had at least two "lives" by 1750. The obverse engraving identifying the royal couple as King George II and Queen Caroline was long taken at face value. However, the medal obverse is clearly reworked, with erasure of most of its border save the laurel wreath at the bottom and the ghost of a letter "S" and another illegible letter opposite the female figure's left shoulder. The new engraving, which matches the style of the reverse engraving, was clearly added to "update" portrait busts from an earlier era. Though no medal specimen has been found that precisely matches the cast double portrait, the Schuyler medal resembles examples produced in Nuremberg, Germany in 1736 to celebrate the marriage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and Princess Augusta of Saxony.^{xxii} Despite heavy wear on the obverse surface of the Schuyler medal, shared features are evident with the Frederick and Augusta medals: both depict the royal couple with distinctive angular facial features; Frederick has long curly hair that extends below his shoulders; and Augusta's hair is pulled tightly back to a topknot, with hair trailing to her shoulders. A German origin for the medal makes sense, if indeed the medal was presented by the five recently-emigrated Moravians. At least one of the missionaries, Pylaeus, hailed from Saxony, and the Moravian Church headquarters was located in the state of Saxony.

One remaining mystery is the refashioning of the medal in 1750. Why would an old medal have been dusted off for the

particular occasion, and who might have done the work? Silver gifts often served as an important element of diplomacy in the Moravians' negotiations with the Iroquois: on a journey to Onondaga in 1750, Conrad Weiser reported that Zeisberger and Cammerhoff presented the chief Canassatego with a large quantity of silver trinkets, including armbands, wristbands, rings, and "two broad pieces of wrote [wrought] Silver to be divided among the Indians."^{xxiii} With no silversmiths on the

frontier, smiths with general metalworking skills, like Anton Schmidt, could fill the gap when needed. The skill required to alter the Schuyler medal and engrave new inscriptions was entirely within the capabilities of Schmidt, a master artisan who had served a traditional apprenticeship under his father (and whose surname suggests an extended family association with the trade).^{xxiv} Anton Schmidt's engraved name, *Rachwistonis*, identified him as a member of the group of Moravian missionaries at Shamokin, but it may have also functioned as a stealthy maker's mark.

MKH 11/16/08





See endnotes on page 21.

A Medal with a Moral (by Lev Tsitrin)

I could spare only a couple of hours for the latest numismatic convention at the Waldorf-Astoria but, despite my resolve to be in and out quickly, I got all but anchored by a damaged portrait medal of the painter Pietra da Cortona by Francois Cheron – not because I loved and admired Cortona’s art (I knew the name, but hardly anything about him or his work) – but because the pouting winged girlie on the reverse was so irresistibly charming. The medal, which obviously fell victim to its too-good gilding, was indeed badly damaged. Forgetting that not all is gold that glitters, and deciding to bypass the non-destructive ways to ascertain its specific gravity, someone put it face down and began hacking it to pieces that could fit into an alembic. The metal resisted cutting far harder than gold would, and the gold-seeking vandal stayed his hand – but not until disfiguring the reverse, bending the medal, and flattening Cortona’s hair on the portrait’s obverse. Yet, because the original cast was clearly of the highest quality, even this wreck was still, to my eye, a desirable piece. I kept coming back to it until the dealer, amused by my dilemma of wanting to get a piece that was, as I put to him, “neither good enough to be a medal nor cheap enough to be a placeholder” agreed to part with it on a bit easier terms.

When I pulled it out of the pocket on my way home and examined the reverse more closely, I could not quite figure what it meant. For the charming girlie with her scepter was not the only thing present on it. On her left, she was leaning on what appeared to be, after a few minutes of puzzled examination, an unloaded balance, unhinged and loose, one of its trays overturned, its pointer hand sticking in a random direction. What could that possibly mean? I decided that it must have signified the fact that Cortona’s art was so superb that there was nothing even to weigh it against, and so the loose balance with an overturned tray was

meant to assert the altogether superior nature of his art, its unassailable supremacy. So far so good, except that there was something to the girlie’s right, too. I took it first for a cloud – there were clouds in the center of the medal – but it did not look like a cloud; it was far too angular. It rather looked, in fact, as paws ending in sharp claws, and a lion’s snout with bared long fangs. Did it signify savage and unfair critics who tried to rip at Cortona’s reputation – but failed?

That seemed sensible too, and by the time I got off the train, I thought I pretty much guessed the meaning of the medal’s reverse – and, naturally, was curious to see whether I got it right, by checking the literature.

Having no books on Cheron’s medals, I checked the internet. Christopher Eimer’s and Ben Weiss’ sites were the natural places to start, and indeed, both described that medal – Christopher Eimer’s archive had two examples, for that matter. To my surprise, there was neither the uniformity of opinion on what that lovely girlie represented (“Fame recumbent, pointing with a sceptre to a wreath, above” was Christopher Eimer’s description of one of the examples; “The figure of Fame, reclining to right, pointing with a sceptre towards a circlet of stars, immediately above” read description of the other, while Ben Weiss called her a “Reclining Genius, pointing with a scepter to a circlet of stars”) – nor, more importantly, was there any mention at all of the other elements of the reverse, avoiding a clear elucidation of its the emblematic meaning. But there were plenty of references to numismatic books – Molinari 254; Robert Eidlitz, *Medals relating to Architects and Architecture* (New York, 1927), 256; Vannel-Toderi 19; Mazzuchelli plate 120, 2. Morton & Eden 21 May 2003, Lot 815.

Well, these were printed books – books which I did not have. The only way to consult them was to go to ANS library – which would take a while.

But the thinking process must have been occurring quite independently of what I

was doing or planning to do. For a few days later I felt something tugging inside my head, seeking to connect the girlie that was sitting in the sky, with a lion and a balance next to her. Are there a lion and a balance in the sky? Well, of course there are – they are two signs of the Zodiac! That’s who her companions were! Well, that I could check on-line, in the Wikipedia, and – guess what! Not only were the lion and the balance parts of zodiac, but the girlie herself was, too – and right in between them! For it turned out that in the sequence of the signs of the Zodiac the lion (Leo, with astronomical duration of August 10 through September 16) is followed by a virgin (Virgo, September 16 – October 30), and the balance (Libra, October 30 – November 20)! From that just one step remained – finding out Pietro da Cortona’s birth date. Here the internet was again indispensable: the Grove Dictionary of Art gives it at a tentative, “?-marked November 1, 1596”–smack at the astronomical joint between the signs of virgin and balance (though, astrologically, firmly in the sign of the balance (October 18 – November 16)). And when I looked at the medal after I learned all that, lo and behold – there is a wide curved band, clearly indicating the plane of the Zodiac, on which the lion, and the girlie, and the balance are all placed, the lower edge going from 7 to 5 o’clock, the upper from 8 to 4 – which I did not notice before at all!

So here we have it – the girlie on the reverse is neither the “fame” nor the “genius,” but a decorously dressed Virgin of the Zodiac, pointing to the propitious arrangement of the stars at Pietro da Cortona’s birth, and stating the gist of his horoscope in a (sort of) anagrammatic, but catchy one-liner “you will be crowned by good and great virtue.”

(Merely “sort of” anagrammatic because there are only 2 “V”s in the obverse legend PETRVS. BERETINVS. E. CORTONNA but 3 “V”s in the reverse line BENE. SVPER. VIRTVS. TE. CORONAT, and, conversely, 3 “N”s in the obverse, but just

2 “N”s in the reverse. One suspects that the town of Cortona was spelled with 2 “N”s because “N” is closest in form to “V” which was so badly needed – it has just one extra vertical bar, after all – and was better than nothing. Of course, the right number of letters could have been achieved by spelling in full the word “from” – “EX” – instead of a tame and unnecessary (what’s there to abbreviate in a two-letter word?) abbreviation “E”– but the intruding “X,” useless for anagrammatic purposes, needed to be taken out. Well, the anagram was forced – but what of that? Making a medal to proclaim your glory to the posterity is too serious a business – no time to be too scrupulous. You do what you’ve got to do.)

However it may be, the image on the reverse of the Pietro da Cortona medal is, thus, not just a stock figure incidental to the obverse, but is critical to the concept of the medal, declaring Pietro’s destiny in an integrally personal way, both in the image and in the legend. Of the reverses of baroque medals, this one, clearly, is one of the most personal, fusing as it does, via anagrammatic legend, the sitter’s image with his horoscope – that is, his hopes and his pride in his fulfilled destiny.

That reading of the medal also gives reasonable clues as to its origin. One suspects that it was far too laborious and un-endurable a task for anyone but the subject of the medal to try to rearrange (and to massage them when they would not oblige) the letters of the name on the obverse into the motto on the reverse; in fact, the task was so hard that a special mention of the fact that we have an anagram here is recorded right on the obverse – this was not a mental labor to be left unnoticed. And if Cortona could bother to toil hard over the inscriptions, it was altogether far too easy for him to devise the design itself. After all, he was giving in his grandiose frescoes the visual representation to the most abstruse emblematic ideas that philosophers and poets who served the nobles of Rome and Florence could invent; and so a design on the theme of “I was born in

November and succeeded pretty well” was just a piece of cake. A decisive proof of Cortona’s authorship of the design would, of course, be Cortona’s preparatory drawing or sketch for the reverse; but there doesn’t seem to be a printed catalog of his drawings, so I could not proceed along that line. We know only that he was talented enough to be a master designer of medals: as a young man he was given a commission to paint feigned bronze medallions that were to be a small part of a large fresco cycle – but his employer was so delighted with them that he asked the young artist to paint most of the rooms, too.

And as to Cheron’s motives in casting a medal for Cortona? There could be at least two. When Cheron came to Rome in 1655 as a young man of 20, Cortona was already the undisputed head of the Roman school of painting, executing the most prestigious commissions from the most powerful families in Tuscany and Rome – the Barberini, the Pamphili, the Medici. He could both teach the talented young man (after all, just a generation later, Cortona’s most trusted pupil and closest follower *Ciro Ferri* would teach design to *Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi*, so it was entirely possible for Cortona to likewise teach the young Cheron), and, of even greater importance, he could have given Cheron some very valuable referrals. A nice token of gratitude in the form of a medal would not be out of place. Perhaps the medal itself has a clue to the impulse behind it, for, unusually, it is signed *F. CHERON. F.R.* instead of common *F. CHERON. F[ecit]* (“made it”). What does this “R” stand for? Unfortunately, I do not have a clue.

Well, how much of that was noticed in the numismatic literature? With much help from *Elizabeth Hahn* of *ANS*, I found the following:

“Molinari,” that is, “Medals and plaquettes from the Molinari Collection at Bowdoin College,” 1976: “Fame recumbent, pointing with a scepter to a wreath above.” “This medal

may have been commissioned from France.” It refers to *Graham Pollard’s* article of 1966 “Some Roman 17-century portrait medals” – which does not discuss its iconography at all; we only learn that “the medal is not noted in the early lives of the artist and the legend do not indicate whether the medal is contemporary or posthumous.”

“Eidlitz,” “Medals and medallions relating to architects compiled and edited and reproduced in great part from the collection of *Robert James Eidlitz*,” 1927: “Reclining genius pointing with her scepter to a circlet of stars.”

“Vannel Toderi,” “Medagli Italiane del Museo Nazionale del Bargello” (2005) number 544: “Reclining Fame with bent head in the attitude of sadness, pointing with her scepter to the crown of stars; next to her are palette and brushes” (“*La Fama sdraiata con la testa china in atto di mestizia, indicata con uno scettro una corona di stelle; accanto, tavolozza e pennelli*”); likewise, the earlier publication by the same authors, a lovely exhibition booklet titled “Medaglie Italiane Barocche & Neoclassiche,” 1990 gives, under number 29 a very similar but slightly more elaborate description, that adds to the previous the fact that “Fame” leans on “palette and brushes” with her left arm: (“*La Fama sdraiata, con la testa china in segno di mestizia nell’atto di indicare con uno scettro una corona di stele nel ciclo; accanto al suo braccio sinistro, una tavolozza e pennelli*”).

Morton and Eden catalogs (auction 31, 11-12 June 2008 (Collection of *Dr. Charles Avery*) lot 468 and auction 3, 21 May 2003 (Florentine Baroque Medals including medals from the collection of the late Professor *Dr. Klaus Lankheit* lot 815) refer to the figure on the reverse as “Fame.”

All of which leads us to the following moral: not every medal has been adequately described, and there is still much to discover. The reason for that is simple: museum collections are enormous, and scholars who catalog them cannot possibly have the time to

give each individual piece much attention. Private collectors, however, are in the exactly opposite position. Not only do they like the objects they buy, which is of itself enough of a reason to find as much about them as possible, but ownership of a piece makes one less indifferent towards it, makes its study less academic and more personal. “What is it that I have here?” is a question that urges a most thorough study of an object, and given that as a rule, acquisition proceeds at a very slow speed, that question can be answered in great depth, and with much new insights, besides resulting in acquisition of much new knowledge.

Which insights and knowledge, I am sure, the editor of MCA advisory would be most happy to commit to print – to our common benefit. In brief, the moral is this: Instead of just cataloging your acquisitions, study them. It is a highly rewarding endeavor.

Our congratulations to Lev for unearthing such an abundance of relevant information on just a single piece! You inspire us all.—Ed.



Letters to the Editor

Letters Answered Medal Rarity Scales

Hi Dick,

I am putting together a small eighteen medal Ludwig Gies exhibit for the National Money Show in Portland and have a quick question regarding a medal rarity scale. Is there a standardized scale for medals? Does the info below approximate the scale you might use?

How would I label a medal that has three examples in museums and one available for private collection? Would I label it as a rarity 9 because four were made, or would it be considered a rarity 10 because only one can be collected? I believe all the pieces I'll be exhibiting number less than 10 made.

Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Henry Scott Goodman
www.karlgoetz.com

Henry:

There is no standard scale of rarity for medals. You may create your own scale or one previously used by another numismatist.

Use the total number in both public and private hands. Use "Quantity struck" as the term for the number originally made. While the term "mintage" may be used for medals -- it implies coins from a mint -- it is better to use "quantity struck." In many instances medals are not made at a "mint" as medal firms are not mints.

If you know the quantity struck and have an estimate of existing, surviving specimens you may calculate a "survival ratio" which is a meaningful number. We medal collectors are at an extreme disadvantage, however, in obtaining the number of existing specimens. We cannot learn of every specimen in collectors hands and in public museums everywhere.

No population studies have been published for medals like those that exist for coins where every coin of a particular variety which has been slabbed or graded by professional organizations has been recorded. There is always the possibility of an obscure museum or a family collection somewhere whose holdings have not been published that might contain the medal of your interest.

You proposed some excellent questions. May we publish these and my comments in MCA Advisor? I am certain they will be of interest to other medal collectors. And Good Luck with your ANA exhibit.

Dick Johnson

Dear John,

Thank you for posting the inquiry about the cased military medals. I hope somewhere out there will have some idea about them, now or in the future. I received the elegant catalog on your peace medals. Such a lovely and

thorough presentation. It is so nice to get large clear images of these pieces. I hope the results of the auction are a ample reward for all the years of study you have put into them and thus into our knowledge. So handsome they are that I can understand how coveted they were by chiefs and warriors.

I forgot if I sent you images of a medal I have owned for some time, which I attach. I have it inset into a mount I made which is contained within an oval frame, both sides visible which I made into a drink tray! Clever idea but now its value may be just too tempting to a tipsy guest. I have also made up such frame mounts for the series of US Mint military medals, Navy in one frame, Army in another.

I read you are now onto a study and collection of Vernon medals.

Now there is a challenge, so many to look into. Great research fun.

Best regards,

Roderic H. Blackburn



Blackburn Medal



Dear John

I've greatly enjoyed the article by David Alexander on Washington medals.

I have often wondered about the "chicken and egg" situation with regard to the similar portraits on the Voltaire medal and on the Wedgwood "Washington" medallion. An example of the Wedgwood "Roman head" medallion is illustrated by Reilly & Savage [Robin Reilly and George Savage, *Wedgwood Portrait Medallions*, London, 1973], p. 331. It is the usual jasper-ware type, though the white bust is placed on a rare yellow background and the authors note that it is impressed with the mark of "Wedgwood and Bentley". Thomas Bentley (1730-1780) died on the 26th November, giving us an end-date for the piece. Now we read that Samuel Curwen had seen the medal as early as the 20th April 1778. I would think that this finally confirms that the medal came before the Wedgwood.

Actually Wedgwood made two varieties of the "Roman head", the second with the bust extended downwards with a more rounded truncation and with a mantle around the sitter's right shoulder. Alas Reilly & Savage give no indication of the date of this second piece.

Kind regards

Daniel Fearon

Dear John,

I enjoyed reading the article in the January, 2009 MCA Advisory by Spiegel and Wehner entitled: *A Tour of the Garrett's Underground Coin Vault at Evergreen House* which reminded me of my visit there in 2006. This underground vault houses the Johns Hopkins University's medical medal collection, some of which was given to the university in 1932 by Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, who was Garrett's personal physician.

The detailed 1964 publication: *Medals relating to Medicine and Allied Sciences in the Numismatic Collection of The Johns Hopkins University* by Sarah Elizabeth Freeman, catalogues the 922 items in the medical medal collection. During my visit there in 2006, I was able to view the majority of the items. These were stored in this vault in trays with numbers which corresponded to the cataloging by Freeman in 1964. Thus over one half of the 1655 items in this vault have already been catalogued. In 2006 there were still copies of the Freeman catalogue available for sale at Evergreen House.

Sincerely,

Jay M. Galst, M.D.

Biographies of our New Directors

Margaret K. Hofer is Curator of Decorative Arts at the New-York Historical Society, where she has worked since 1993. Margi's responsibilities include oversight of the medals cabinet, numbering more than 2,000 specimens. She has lectured and written on discoveries in the N-YHS collection, including a presentation at the ANS's 2003 Coinage of the Americas Conference on two previously unrecorded strikes of Joseph Wright's pattern quarter dollar from 1792 and a cache of unpublished badges or "eagles" worn by members Society of the Cincinnati. Margi has curated numerous exhibitions on topics as diverse as Tiffany lamps, Orientalism, Empire furniture, presentation silver, and New York stoneware. Her publications include *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* (D Giles Limited, 2007); *The Games We Played: The Golden Age of Board and Table Games* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2003); and *Seat of Empire* (New-York Historical Society, 2002); articles include "The Case of the Mystery Medal," *The New-York Journal of*

American History (Fall 2004). She is currently working on a catalogue of the Historical Society's silver collection. Margi is a graduate of Yale University and received her M.A. from the University of Delaware's Winterthur Program in Early American Culture.

Margaret K. Hofer
Curator of Decorative Arts
The New-York Historical Society
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024
(t) 212-873-3400 x229
(f) 212-595-5447

Tony Lopez - I was raised in Honolulu, Hawaii at the same time, and only a few miles from the then future and now incumbent President of the United States. I attended St. Mary's College of California, where I graduated in 1980 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Government with an Economics emphasis. After many years in the insurance industry, and then managing and operating a small finance and credit business, I decided to settle down into my greatest avocation, teaching mathematics to struggling and at-risk kids. As an educator for the last decade, I received a number of honors, including twice being named as a nominee for the Disney Teacher of the Year Award. At the end of this school year, I will be taking an early retirement from teaching, and plan on spending much more time with my three young children, doing some fishing, and pursuing my many hobbies. This includes, of course, medal collecting, researching, and writing. I also collect Revolutionary War era autographs and manuscripts, and with my love for colonial American artifacts and history, I intend to continue my formal education and complete a Masters Degree in History. Not all of my activities will be docile, however. With a great passion for airborne adrenaline activities, included on my retirement to-do list will be obtaining my private pilot's license and (hopefully) an aerobatic certification, and also

to become fully certified as a recreational skydiver.

Anne E. Bentley—a graduate of Syracuse University, has been with the Massachusetts Historical Society since 1973, first as conservator of manuscripts, then as curator of the art collection. Since 1984, she has been responsible for the Society's numismatic collection. Founded in 1791 "to collect, preserve, and communicate materials for a complete history of this country," the Historical Society has collected Massachusetts-related coins, tokens, medals, badges, paper currency, and fiscal paper from its very beginning. Ms. Bentley has authored papers on the 1776 Massachusetts pine tree copper penny and a copper Columbia and Washington medal given to the MHS in 1791 by Joseph Barrell, on behalf of the investors in the voyage. She and Mr. Adams gave a joint presentation on Comitia Americana medals to the Coinage of the Americas Conference in 2003.

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3115 Nestling Pine Court
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Or email completed form to: bdtayman@verizon.net
MCA WEBSITE: <http://www.medalcollectors.org>

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- ⁱ See object file 1923.36 for the donor history. Fanny Ogden's account of the medal is itself historically inaccurate – the office of Mohawk chief continues until the present day, and the "French and English wars" were over by 1748.
- ⁱⁱ Ibid. A copy of Williams' letter, addressed to "Ogden Esqr." and dated only "Wednesday," is in the object file. It was intended for Thomas W. Ogden (1810-1901), husband of Ruth Schuyler, then owner of her great-grandfather's medal.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ely S. Parker to John Schuyler Esq., 15 December 1893, collection of George T. Drost. Reproduced in "The Medal Collectors of America Advisory," (July 2005): 9.
- ^{iv} Sydney P. Noe, "An Indian Medal of 1750," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 8 (April 1924): 3-9.
- ^v Ibid., 4.
- ^{vi} Charlotte Wilcoxon, "Indian-Trade Silver of the New York Colonial Frontier," *The Magazine Antiques* (December 1979): 1356; and Martha Wilson Hamilton, *Silver in the Fur Trade 1680-1820* (Chelmsford, MA: Martha Hamilton Publishing, 1995), 145 (mistakenly identified as gold).
- ^{vii} William Martin Beauchamp, *Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-66* (Dehler Press, 1916): 10-11 and Earl P. Olmstead, *David Zeisberger: A Life Among the Indians* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 39-40. The names for Zeisberger, Bull, and others are recounted in Bishop A.G. Spangenberg's journal of a journey to Onondaga in 1745.
- ^{viii} Ibid. Bull was more commonly known by his Indian name *Shebosh*, or "running water."
- ^{ix} Joseph Mortimer Levering, *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1741-1892* (Bethlehem, PA: Times Publishing Company, 1903), 242, n. 7.
- ^x Ibid. Levering does not offer a meaning for Rauch's Indian name.
- ^{xi} Olmstead, *David Zeisberger*, 45 and *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 5 (Nazareth, PA: Printed for the Society, 1899): 105.
- ^{xii} Olmstead, *David Zeisberger*, 44.
- ^{xiii} Ibid., 44-45.
- ^{xiv} Ibid., 45.
- ^{xv} Located at the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, PA, Indian Missions record 121:5.
- ^{xvi} Herman Wellenreuther, ed. *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2005), 47 n. 161.
- ^{xvii} Olmstead, *David Zeisberger*, 57-58, 64-65. A fathom of wampum measured six feet and denoted a specific monetary value. I am grateful to George Hamell for suggesting that the Moravians may have been presenters rather than recipients of the medal.
- ^{xviii} Hamilton *Silver in the Fur Trade*, 144. Examples of Virginia "passport badges" are at Colonial Williamsburg and the Virginia Historical Society.
- ^{xix} Ibid., 162, n. 0.
- ^{xx} Benson John Lossing, *Life and Times of Philip Schuyler* (New York: Henry Holt, 1883), 1: 387. Lossing reported that he was "adopted as a child of the Mohawks, and made a chief, with the name of *Tho-rah Than-year-da-kayer*."
- ^{xxi} Gavin K. Watt and James F. Morrison, *Rebellion in the Mohawk Valley* (Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 2002), 39.
- ^{xxii} See *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the Death of George II* (London: The British Museum, 1885), 2: 514-516, nos. 69 and 70. I am grateful to Christopher Eimer for pointing out the similarities of these medals to the Schuyler example.
- ^{xxiii} Paul A.W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 314.
- ^{xxiv} Charles A. LeCount, "The Blacksmiths of Early Bethlehem," p. 2. Center for Medieval Studies, Pennsylvania State University. www.engr.psu.edu/mtah/articles/blacksmiths_early_bethlehem.htm.